

The Communalism in India —Its Origin & Growth—

by

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Introduction by
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Lahore
PARAMOUNT PUBLICATIONS

First Edition — May 1941

FOREWORD

by

BABU RAJINDRA PRASHAD

Ex-President of Indian National Congress

The communal problem is the most important and intriguing problem in the life of India today. It seems to be almost insoluble. As time passes the knots become more and more entangled, and each attempt at a solution leaves it more complex and more complicated. The opinion is firmly held by a large section of politically minded persons in India that the problem is a British creation. It has been inspired by the age-old policy of "divide and rule", and no satisfactory solution is possible and the "division" is bound to continue.

INTRODUCTION

by

KALINATH RAY

Ex-Editor, The Tribune,

When some time ago I was asked by Professor Abdul Majid Khan to write an Introduction to his pamphlet, "Communalism, its origin and growth", I readily consented, both because of the outstanding importance of the subject at a time when communalism is Indian's public enemy No 1, and because I knew no Muslim public man in this province who was better fitted to write on the subject than Professor Abdul Majid Khan. Not only is he a pucca nationalist, who has not even for once failed to live up to his creed during the

testing and critical period through wh
the Punjab along with the rest of In'
has been passing ever since th introductio
of the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms .
even more particularly since the pa
of the new Government of India Act .
there is no public man in this prov
who has made a more careful or
detailed study of the question of re
representation than he Of the pernicious
decision of His Majesty's Governm
familiarly known as the Communal Award
he has been a relentless unsparin &
indefatigable crit who has never l

in the sense, that he exhibits no conscious bias against truth

It is because I knew Professor Abdul Majid Khan to be all this, that I agreed to write an Introduction to his pamphlet on Communalism. But I had no idea at the time of the elaborate care he had taken in writing the pamphlet and the amount of useful information he had succeeded in compressing into a slender volume of no more than 80 pages. In both respects the study of the manuscript has been revelation to me. I do not remember to have seen any other pamphlet of equal or even larger size in which this subject of vital importance to the Punjab and to India has been more ably, more thoroughly or more exhaustively dealt with. The pamphlet, when printed, will be found a very useful book of reference by all contemporary publicists and especially by newspaper men. But it is more than a book of reference. It is at once an effective exposure of the unholy alliance between the forces of communal obscurantism and of political reaction of which the present communal

decision of the British Government is the outcome and a powerful and convincing plea for the creation of a united front against separate communal electorates I have no hesitation in commending the pamphlet to the careful perusal of all those who take a genuine and living interest in the very important problem with which it deals



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**Communalism
in
India**

"COMMUNALISM IN INDIA— ITS ORIGIN & GROWTH"

By Prof Abdul Majid Khan

Chronologically speaking the question of communal representation dates back to the year 1888, when the Dufferin Reforms Committee definitely held that steps should be taken to secure the representation of various classes and interests ; touching the same Lord Dufferin wrote : "By this means the field of public discussion will be considerably enlarged and the various administrations concerned will be able to shape their course with the advantage of a more distinct knowledge of the wishes and feelings of the communities with whose interests they may be

required to deal than has hitherto been the case for those wishes and feelings will be expressed not as at present through self constituted self nominated and therefore untrustworthy channels but by the mouths of those who will be legally constituted representatives of various interests and classes (Montford Joint Report, page 35)

The above extract shows how the question of communal representation was first started by Lord Dufferin Later on Lord Kimberley speaking on the Indian Councils Bill of 1892 in the House of Lords demanded of his own accord that some provisions should be made to secure the representation of minorities He said It has been found in this country not very easy to protect the interests of minorities by any contrivance that can be devised but there must be found some mode in India of seeing that minorities such as the important body of Muslims who are frequently in a minority in parts of that country are fully represented (Lord Kimberley in the House of Lords speaking on the Indian Councils Bill 1892) In the foregoing speech of Lord Kimberley we get what we might call the beginnings of the Anglo-Muslim alliance (

While transmitting to the then Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, a copy of the Act as passed by the Parliament in 1892, the Secretary of State, Lord Cross, commented on it in the following terms. "Where Corporations have been established with definite powers, upon a recognised administrative basis or where associations have been formed upon a substantial community of legitimate interests, professional commercial or territorial, your Excellency and the local Governors may find convenience and advantage in consulting from time to time such bodies and ascertaining at your discretion an expression of their views and recommendations with regard to the selection of members in whose qualifications they may be disposed to confide." (Government of India's Memoranda to the Simon Commission, Volume I, page 128).

After the receipt of the Secretary of State's instructions, the Government of India defined for each Province the classes which were of sufficient importance to require representation. Thus the classes considered to require representation in the Province of Bengal were as follows —

1. Hindus.

- 2 Muslims
- 3 Europeans and Anglo-Indians
- 4 Merchants Traders and Manufacturers
- 5 The Planting Community
- 6 Presidency Corporations
- 7 The Urban classes of the Mofussil
8. The Rural classes and
- 9 The Professional and Literary classes

It will be noticed that the classes to which the Government of India considered that representation must be secured comprised communities for instance Hindus Muslims and Europeans classes for instance the Urban Rural and Professional classes and interests for instance Commercial interests (Government of India's Memoranda to the Simon Commission Volume I Pages 128-129)

Here again the responsibility for conferring the right of community electorates entirely rested with the British Government

II

Sir Bamfylde Fuller when Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam elegantly expressed the policy of the British Government by publicly declaring that he had

two wives, one Hindu and one Muslim and that the Muslim was his favourite."

The partition of Bengal led to an intense and vigorous agitation in the country, and Lord Minto, the then Viceroy, was exceedingly keen on allaying it. After consultation with Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, he proposed some constitutional reforms, calculated to meet the wishes of the saner and more sober section among the moderate political leaders. Lord Minto was in reality mainly anxious to win the support of the vocal Muslims, the most of whom were either title-hunters or job-seekers. "Minto had a liking for the Muslims", writes John Buchan, his famous biographer "Did not Lord Curzon as Viceroy flout Hindu opinion by the Partition of Bengal, in the hope of winning favour with the Muslims? And worst of all did not the introduction of 'Communal electorates' by the Government of England aggravate and intensify Hindu-Muslim rivalry? Indians have no doubt in their minds that the British policy has always been 'Divide and rule', the historic policy of conquerors throughout the ages"

("*Modern India*", by V H. Rutherford)

the apple of discord so far as discord has proceeded from politics (*Eduard Thompson in The Reconstruction of India*)

III

It seems undeniable that such an arrangement (communal electorate) tends to encourage the appeal to communal sentiment instead of developing political association on lines of that broader nationalism which Indians of the better type desire to see (*India Land of Regrets by Charles Sandford*)

In 1916 however the Congress-League scheme was drafted for submission to the British Parliament and for the first time in the history of British India there was an agreed settlement—known as the Lucknow Pact between non Muslims and Muslims. But the Congress League scheme was in itself an organic whole. It was therefore altogether unfair on the part of the framers of the Government of India Act of 1919 to make its one leg longer and one arm shorter by throwing the whole of it on the dung heap minus its weakest joint i.e. the Lucknow Pact. The late Mr Montagu frankly admitted that the system of separate electorates was opposed to

the teaching of history, perpetuated class division, and stereotyped existing relations. "But it was perhaps his doctrinaire radicalism that betrayed itself in the treatment of the question of communal representation, i.e. the creation of separate constituencies for various communities which, however important or however much entitled to make their voices heard, might be submerged in constituencies based purely on territorial representation" (Sir Valentine Chirol in "*India Old and New*") It is a matter of history that the merits of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were totally eclipsed by the retention of communal bitterness. "The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms unfortunately accentuated the rivalries between the two great communities. Now the importance of this fact of the intense communal hostility of India is that it makes the working of democracy in the European sense extraordinarily difficult"—(J M Kenworthy, in "*India A Warning*".)

"But since the casting of the apple of political discord by (the late) Mr. Montagu into the comparative-quiet of the Indian pools, the Hindu and the Muslim who lived happily together, are now gazing fiercely across the table at each other."

("*The Living India*", by Sir George MacMunn).

So long as an arrangement (communal electorate) so wholly discordant with the democratic principle is retained in the constitution India's political future can not develop entirely on Western lines nor can she attain to full and complete self government.

(Sir William Marrin in *Modern India*)

IV

Referring to the Communal theme Lord Oliver stated in the London Times of July 10 1926 that No one with any close acquaintance with Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialism in India in favour of the Muslim community partly on the ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make weight against Hindu nationalism Later on when questioned—or rather criticised—for the above statement in the House of Lords on July 28 1926 he modified it slightly by saying that he did not impute to the Government that it has exercised favouritism in its dealings as between Muslims and Hindus Yet he declared more forcefully again that the feeling which I had encountered and which I had underlined in

my mind in that letter, (of July 10, 1926) was something of which I give you an example. When the Hindu-Muslim Pact was made, it was a pact which strengthened the probability of an advance towards the Swaraj policy in India. A very large number of persons, officials and others in India, regard the advance towards the self-governing Swaraj policy as a movement deleterious to British interests in India, and I say confidently that when the Hindu-Muslim pact broke up, there was a considerable amount of satisfaction felt, and it was expressed in what I may call the anti-Swaraj Press in India, that the pact had broken up ”

In another very significant letter to the London "Times", dated 12th August, 1926, Lord Olivier observed "When Lord Minto was approached on behalf of the Muslim Community with a request for separate representation (by election) in excess of the proportion of its numbers, he (Lord Minto) answered. "you justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength, but in the respect of the political importance your community and the services it has rendered to the Empire I am entirely with you Imagine what

Muslims and Englishmen would have said if any Governor General impressed with the achievements of Aryan civilization in India had replied to a Hindu memorial in the terms employed by Lord Minto when responding to his Muslim deputation

On July 20th 1926 Communal representation was also denounced fairly vigorously in the House of Commons by two eminent M Ps Communal representation Colonel Wedgwood held means that the minority has a spokesman in Parliament, in the Assembly and in the Legislature He must use every occasion to emphasize the fact that he is the best representative of a particular religion ! Communal representation in fact, accentuates every point it is desirable to forget whereas the representation to which we are accustomed in this country a common electoral roll reduces differences to their proper level and accentuates common ground Almost identical were the views expressed on this vexed question by Mr Scurr M P in the House of Commons on July 20th 1926

We have to get rid as soon as possible of the Communal franchise As long as you have it it will be used by the natives for their own

particular grievances; for they simply use the franchise for position, power and prestige in their own community. They only think in terms of Mussalmans and Hindus instead of in terms of Indians. We are responsible to a large extent for the continuation and intensification of these Communal riots, because we still maintain the Communal franchise."

V

As a result of the challenge thrown to the Indian politicians by Lord Birkenhead, the Nationalist leaders coalesced, and in August 1928 the Nehru Report was published. The well-considered opinion of competent constitutional authorities is, that the Nehru Report is by far the most significant constitutional document ever prepared in the annals of British India. It is also axiomatic that a better, more equitable, and fairer solution of the minority muddle, it is impossible to imagine. In India, a land of about 40 crores of people, with an infinite variety of creed, colour and caste, the easiest thing to do is to engineer opposition to any man, measure or movement. Naturally the Nehru Report was in certain quarters ruthlessly criticised and unfavourably commented upon. But one can

safely say that on the whole, the Nationalists both among Hindus and Muslims welcomed it with both hands Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the late Lala Lajpat Rai enthusiastically supported it Doctor Moonje half heartedly welcomed it Sikh leaders barring two or three hunting exceptions treated it as something unsatisfactory and unacceptable

VI

Let us now turn to the Muslim attitude towards the Nehru Report For full one year the Ali Brothers launched a vigorous and virulent campaign against it

The issue of the boycott of the Simon Commission however occasioned a split in the All India Muslim League those who favoured its boycott were led by Mr Jinnah and those who advocated co operation with it were headed by the late Sir Mohammad Shafi The more advanced and independent section of the Muslim League which met at Calcutta towards the end of December 1928 authorised Mr Jinnah to press for the incorporation of five amendments into the Nehru Report at the All-Parties Convention with a view to making it more acceptable to the Muslims

As ill-luck would have it, Mr Jayakar made the most eloquent and without doubt the most unfortunate speech of his life, opposing the Muslim demand for the reservation of 1/3rd seats in the central legislature; and the amendments of Mr. Jinnah were thrown out by the Convention. This was nothing short of a tragedy as it led to a complete breach between the supporters of the Nehru Report and the Jinnahites.

The gulf between the defenders of the Nehru Report and the Ali Brothers became almost unbridgeable, and the latter left Calcutta for Delhi to attend the so-called All-Parties Muslim Conference (under the presidency of H. H the Agha Khan), where the pro-Simonites led by the late Sir Mohammad Shafi had mustered strong. Mr Jinnah's fourteen points were adroitly improved upon, and on 2nd January 1929, an elaborate and comprehensive resolution, embodying the most extravagant and irrational demands imaginable, was unanimously passed by the conference

VII

In the middle of 1930, the Simon Report was published. It is but pertinent to mention in

this connection that the formation of almost all the Provincial Committees which helped and assisted the Simon Commission and the Nair Committee was entirely due to the coalescence of the official bloc (nominated Muslim and non Muslim members) and the bulk of the Muslim M L C's in nearly all the Provinces except C P (the only Province where there was no Provincial Committee at all to collaborate with them) It is also pertinent to remember that a fairly big Muslim delegation with Sir Mohammad Shafi as their spokesman tendered evidence before the Simon Commission at Lahore Despite these services rendered to Sir John and his co workers it must be conceded in fairness to them that they were not at all taken in by the demonstration of co operation on the part of the Muslim Separatists and took a surprisingly wholesome reasonable logical and just view of the communal problem namely that in the absence of a fresh mutual understanding between Hindus and Muslims the Lucknow Pact ought to remain intact in the Provinces and that in the Central Legislature 60 per cent. seats should go to the former and 30 per cent. to the latter The Muslim reactionaries were thus for a while con

siderably disillusioned and disappointed, and the chances of a satisfactory settlement between the two major communities brightened.

"At the same time we are no less clearly convinced that separate communal electorates serve to perpetuate political divisions on purely communal lines."—The Simon Commission Report (signed by seven statesmen of Great Britain)

VIII

History is eloquent on this point that, since the medieval ages, throughout the world the rise and consolidation of empires have been the direct outcome of the clever pursuit of the 'divide and rule' policy by those in power. During the last four centuries the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch and the French have followed it, with varying results. Even school children know that the beginnings of the British Rule in India can be traced to the interference of the East India Company in the succession-squabbles of the heirs of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Nawab of Hyderabad who died in 1748, and in the dynastic disputes between Chanda Sahib and Mohammad Ali, the two rival claimants for the Nawabship of Carnatic. In Bengal the

unedifying enmity between Oma Chand and Siraj ud Daulah was astutely exploited so by and by the British Indian Empire grew

Since 1885 a section of the officials have been patronising the Muslim reactionaries for their hostility towards the Indian National Congress. The attitude of Lord Dufferin Lord Kimberley and Lord Cross towards communal representation has already been commented upon. In 1909 in spite of the fact that there was no pact or compromise between the two major sister communities the sop of separate electorates was given to Muslims merely for the asking. In 1919 the Lucknow Pact offered a sort of convenient excuse for the continuance of preferential treatment to them. It has already been hinted at that the Simon Commissioners had a judicial mind on the communal quarrels and gave an impartial verdict the communal diehards were thus bound to express dissatisfaction with the impartial findings of the Report concerning their anti national demands but here again the British Civilians came to their rescue.

Towards the end of 1930 the Government of

India sent their Despatch on the Royal Commissioners' Report, to the Secretary of State. This proposed that 49 per cent. seats in the Punjab should be allotted to Muslims. This was nothing short of a distinct departure from the Lucknow Pact, and a contravention of the Simon Commission's recommendations. In plain language, the Government of India Despatch is a document prepared and signed by the Members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. Evidently, the voice of the Muslim Executive Councillor carries a lot of weight with his other Civilian colleagues, who have not the slightest hesitation in humouring him. In certain matters of broad constitutional importance, the Civilian element carries the day, but in communal discussions the Muslim member generally dominates their decision - it is just a question of mutual 'give and take'. This is why the advice of the Royal Commissioners with regard to the communal problem was summarily rejected by the Executive Councillors when preparing the draft of Government of India's Despatch. On this point one cannot but quote copiously from "*The Indian Chaos*," a valuable book written by an eminent Englishman, the late

Mr F W Wilson ex Editor of the 'Pioneer' of Allahabad. It was generally accepted in India writes Mr Wilson on page 81 "that Sir Fazl Hussain had a very clear understanding with the Civil Service element in the Government of India. It was generally supposed that this understanding comprised a support of the Civil Service point of view in return for a support for Muslim claim. Whatever may be the truth behind these general beliefs this much at least has to be recorded as an established fact, that this Muslim leader always proved himself most hostile not only to the idea of entering into a pact and understanding with Gandhi and the Congress but even to the general policy which necessitated intimate conversations with the Moderate leaders. Again on page 115 Mr Wilson continues "Sir Fazl Hussain's undoubted alliance with the Civil Service elements in Government, originally begun at Lahore" meant necessarily the submersion of the nationalist Muslim a stiffening of the Muslim demands and the emergence of a plan of campaign at the last Round Table Conference which with its threat to the successful issue of those proceedings must have gladdened the hearts of the diehard

IX

To give credit where it is due, let it be stated that towards the close of the First Round Table Conference, Sir Mohammad Shafi played the game. He was vividly conscious of the deep-rooted prejudice of the then British Premier and Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Secretary of State, in favour of Joint Electorates, and he was fully aware of the fact that the Labour Government, though not in power was still in office, he, therefore, took an eminently sane, sound and statesmanlike view of the communal conundrum. It is not sufficiently known and appreciated that for his accommodating attitude, he was then severely criticised by the Muslim diehard Press of India in general, and by "The Muslim Outlook" of Lahore in particular; and the obduracy of Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan and others was much made of. Unfortunately, at the First Round Table Conference, no agreement was reached. It is an open secret now that negotiations fell through because of one seat for a particular community.

At the Second Round Table Conference,

after the formation of the National Cabinet in England the atmosphere for a compromise became altogether murky The Premier was nothing but a mere puppet a kind of waxen toy in the hands of the Conservatives who were in an overwhelming majority in the British Parliament and Sir Samuel Hoare the successor of Mr Benn as Secretary of State for India naturally assumed the most important position in the British delegation Sir Samuel Hoare was not at all keen on going farther than the Simon Report partial responsibility in the Provinces and complete irresponsibility at the Centre He coaxed cajoled and threatened in order to win over Mahatma Gandhi to this position But Mahatma Ji as a faithful and fearless advocate of the cause of India was found unyielding and adamant over the main issue Thereupon the reactionaries set themselves in right earnest to discredit Mahatma Ji At this unexpected development the Muslim delegates literally went into raptures Barring one or two well known exceptions the entire Muslim delegation was now seized with the idea of slighting Mahatma Ji in the eyes of the world for this alleged inability to unravel the communal knot Gandhi

Ji could not but aver that the failure of the Conference was inherent in its very composition. In this connection it is worth-while to remember the opinion of a Moderate leader, an ex-Minister, Mr. Chintamani,—who echoed a widely prevalent belief in India when he lucidly observed that Simla need not wear the mask of injured innocence if uncharitable critics greatly dare and say that some, at least, of the delegates to the Round Table Conference were the chosen instruments for the effectuation of unavowed purposes.

"Mr. Gandhi (at the Second Round Table Conference) spared no effort to obtain a reconciliation of the conflicting claims for seats both in the difficult provinces of Bengal and the Punjab and in the Central Legislature and the Government. The firmer the stand taken by the Muslims, the more convinced became the Hindus that the former were receiving the support of the British Government and the Government of India on the *divide et impera* principle".—("India Today and Tomorrow", by Margarita Barns.)

Gandhi Ji, however, took the wind out of the Muslim sails, by expressing his willingness,

to accept almost all of their demands if they in return would resist Dr Ambedkar's claim of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, and would present a united front to the British Government on the larger constitutional issues of full control over External affairs Finance and Defence with such safeguards as would demonstrably be in the interests of India. But an alliance had already been formed and cemented among some of the delegates nominated by the Viceroy as representing Muslims Christians and the Depressed Classes. The understanding arrived at by those who were being egged on by diehards like Lord Lloyd and others to ignore Mahatma Ji altogether and leave the progressive element of the Round Table Conference in the lurch was known as the Minorities Pact. It was boomed very extensively by almost every British reactionary from the Prime Minister down to the most irresponsible gutter news paper as a great document defending the British supremacy against 'the demands of Indian Nationalism'. Mahatma Ji lost no time in completely repudiating it as it was absolutely impossible for him to submit tamely to the indirect dictation of 'British Tories' through the Muslim

communalists, without compromising the honour of his country. Three different suggestions at this stage were also put forward for the settlement of the communal question—(a) Arbitration by the League of Nations; (b) Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as Arbiter in his individual capacity and not as the Premier of the National Cabinet, and (c) Official decision of the British Cabinet. For obvious reasons, the Muslim delegates rejected both (a) and (b) and joyously declared that they would abide by the award of the British Cabinet. In replying to address of welcome at Noakhali, (Bengal) Mr. Fazul Huq, one of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, is reported to have stated—“During the last Round Table Conference the sixteen Muslim delegates were approached by some Britishers who suggested to them (the Muslim delegates) to declare that they would not accept Dominion Status, until and unless separate electorate was granted.”—“The Modern Review,” June, 1931.

Much light was thrown on the nefarious activities and the shady transactions of Muslim Separatists and their other allies, by a “very private and confidential” circular issued by “loyalists”

containing the views of Mr Benthal who attended the Round Table Conference as a representative of the British interests in India. The following extracts from this extraordinary document speak for themselves —

"The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team. They played their cards with great skill throughout they promised us support and they gave it in full measure. In return they asked us (the Europeans) that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and we should without pampering them do what we can to find place for them in European firms so that they may have a chance to improve their material position and the general standing of their community.

"On the whole there was one policy of the British nation and the British community in India and that was to make up our minds on a national policy and stick to it. But after the General Elections (of 1932) the right wing of the British Government made up its mind to break up the Conference and to fight the Congress. The Muslims who do not want responsibility at the Centre were delighted Government

undoubtedly changed their policy and tried to get away with Provincial autonomy with a promise of central reforms

"The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us".

X

Later on, the Consultative Committee of the Round Table Conference met in the Viceroy's House at Delhi on Monday the 22nd February, 1932, under the Presidency of His Excellency the Viceroy; and its Muslim members, obviously inspired by certain Civilians and Churchillians, threatened obstruction, with the result that men like Mr. Jayakar and Dr Sapru were effectively cowed. At that meeting Ch Zefrullah Khan remarked "It was felt that the stage had arrived where communities had, as it were, taken up their last trench positions from which they were not willing to retire and that the difficulty could only be solved by a decision of the British Government itself rather than by further attempt at discussion which will land us nowhere. Consequently, I think, if my

colleagues will agree that as our efforts have failed Your Excellency might well press upon the British Government the necessity of pronouncing an immediate decision of those questions which were before the Minorities Committee

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While supporting Ch Zafrullah Khan Dr Shafaat Ahmed Khan observed We have got complete faith in the Conference in negotiations round a table and it is from this point of view that I have to urge Your Excellency to ask the Prime Minister to give us a decision

The third Muslim spokesman at that meeting also talked in the same strain—Sir A H Gaznavi said The difficulties which confronted us in London and stood in the way of a communal settlement still confront us and stand in our way In view of the failure of our efforts to reach a decision ourselves we cannot profitably discuss many of the important and vital questions on the Agenda paper until and unless His Majesty's Government makes an authoritative declaration on the communal question

Another Government of India's Despatch followed and the Executive fiat of the Civilian members of the Executive Council of the

Viceroy, in consultation with the Muslim Executive Councillors, was, later on (in August, 1932) with very slight modifications (if any) announced by the Premier as the British Cabinet's award.

3 XI

In this Award there was no mention of the Muslim representation in the Central Legislature, no reference to the vesting of residuary powers and no definite promise of the separation of Sindh—that is to say, these three points were still unsettled. Therefore, another attempt was made by the well-meaning friends of India to have a National Solution of the communal problem by holding the All-Parties Unity Conference at Allahabad. Till then, it was authoritatively rumoured that it had been practically decided by the British Government to give 30 per cent. seats to Muslims in the Central Legislative Assembly. The Allahabad Unity Conference consequently adopted a more liberal attitude and conceded 32 per cent to them at the Centre, and the conditional separation of Sindh. The commitments of the originators of the Allahabad Unity Conference were immediately taken hold of, and the Secretary of State was

again prevailed upon to hasten the announcement of the reservation of one third seats to Muslims at the Centre and the unconditional separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency under the New Reforms The Muslim reactionaries are rejoicing at this clever (orpedoing) of the ship of the National Unity Thoroughly entrenched in their position having established a banking account on the Government's friend ship they are proceeding to demand large overdrafts

XII

In June 1934 the Congress Working Committee adopted an attitude of neutrality towards the Communal Award compelled perhaps by the exigencies of the coming Legislative Assembly elections But all fair minded and nationally inclined persons are convinced of the unwise step that the Congress took towards the Award for to say that the Congress 'can neither accept nor reject the Communal Award as long as the division of opinion exists is to betray what might be termed political timidity The Award being a negation of nationalism must be summarily scrapped by the Congress

being a document which cuts across all fundamental tenets of democracy, it must be unceremoniously rejected; being a flagrant piece of injustice, it must be denounced right and left. And now it has been in a way altogether rejected by the Congress. Wiser counsels have ultimately prevailed

XIII

"Separate electorates have been made, a party cry to divert attention from wider issues. The core of the Muslim League consists of land-lords and others who are afraid of the Congress agrarian legislation. . It is worth-remembering that the representatives of the Muslims at the R T C. had little or no contact with the Muslim masses and had not been chosen by them. English business interests were encouraging Muslim enterprise. They are behind the Muslim Chamber of Commerce in Bengal and in that province Europeans get five times the representation that they deserve. These innumerable sectional interests militate against all progressive and modern developments. Imperialism has demanded for its operation a backward country

and thus is bound to hamper or actively to prevent progressive tendencies — (*The Present Condition of India* by Leonard M Schiff)

The Award has separate¹ electorates as its corner stone Experience has established beyond a shadow of doubt that during the past thirty years under separate electorates there has been no appreciable decrease in the number of Muslim beggars Muslim debtors and Muslim criminals The reason is not far to seek for separate electorates are a bureaucratic device and not at all a minority safeguard On the other hand they have done a lot of harm to the cause of the country The following extract from an exceedingly well written book is worth noting Their (ie separate electorates) effect was wholly bad It is not only that they have led Indians to organise along sectarian lines for this was probably inevitable and caste grouping occurs even within the Hindu constituencies but the system throws up the worst type of pugnacious fanatic who loves to prove his doctrines orthodox by blows and knocks The feeling that great changes were going to take place and the prospect of

some actual transfer's of responsibility and control over appointments have combined to rouse all the meaner political passion especially in those provinces like Bengal and the Punjab, where two communities are nearly equal in number A further and very grave and sad feature of the communal electorates is that both sides are stirred to new missionary enterprise, when the reward is not only a soul but also a permanent addition to one's voting strength The communal politicians get all the support they need from an irresponsible press, while ill-feeling amongst the educated classes is kept alive, ("The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India" by E Thompson and C T Garrett)

"The Englishman in India for example stands as a very statue of justice He says in effect, I am impartial in your religious disputes because I believe in neither of your religions I am impartial in your conflicts of custom and sentiment because your customs and sentiments are different from and abysmally inferior to my own Finally, I am impartial as to your interests, because they are both equally opposed to mine, which is to keep you both equally

powerless against me in order that I may extract money from you to pay salaries and pensions to myself and my fellow Englishmen as rulers over you In return for which you get the inestimable benefit of a government that does absolute justice between Indian and Indian being wholly preoccupied with the maintenance of absolute injustice as between India and England —(*John Bull's Other Island* by George Bernard Shaw)

Mr H N Brailsford was not at all guilty of any exaggeration when in Rebel India he wrote that The intense anxiety of the English Conservative Press to preserve separate electorates has been most illuminating Alas it is too true that communalism is like opium the more it is administered the greater is the appetite of those addicted to it To dream of unity without joint-electorates is simply to cry for the moon Nay complete independence is not worth having if separate electorates are to continue for national solidarity and communal electorates can never go together Let us have joint-electorates first and later on all other things will take care of themselves That in reality is the crux of the communal problem

It is far easier for the British Government to grant full Dominion Status to India than to introduce joint-electorates. Hence the problem of problems is the immediate scrapping of separate electorates. It is high time that we formed a "United Front" against separate electorates.

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Questionnaire about the Communal Problem

A scientific approach to the communal problem is the need of the hour. A comprehensive compilation of the well considered views of leading publicists and eminent leaders will serve a useful purpose. On behalf of the Fellowship of Faiths Lahore I am issuing the following Questionnaire about the Communal Problem and it is earnestly requested that very brief replies to these questions may kindly be sent to my college address i.e. *Forman Christian College (Lahore)*

1 How to eradicate Communalism ?

What practical steps should be taken in your opinion to eradicate Communalism from our country?

2 Communal Distrust

What are the causes of discord and distrust among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs? What remedies or steps should be taken to bring about harmony and good-will among them?

3 "Divide and Rule" Policy of the Government

It is believed by many people that, so long as British Imperialism continues to govern the country, communalism cannot be uprooted, because the policy of the British Government has all along been to create and encourage communalism. What steps would you suggest for counteracting the effects of such a policy and for spreading really national feeling among all communities in the country? Please give your considered opinion, with reasons and instances.

4 Communal Representation.

What are the effects of Communal Representation in the legislatures, cabinets and local bodies, in the form of (a) reservation of seats with joint electorates, (b) separate communal electorates? Should there be a time limit in

the statute at the end of which there may be a total abolition of communal representation in public bodies ?

5 Communal Compromise

Many people think that under prevailing conditions a political compromise among the different communities based upon separate electorates and other extreme communal demands should not be accepted as it can not but result in increased bitterness and friction. Only such a communal settlement should be accepted as may lead to the total abolition of communalism and to the strengthening of the bonds of common citizenship. What is your point of view ?

6 Communal Disorders

What are the usual causes which produce communal disorder or riots ? What effective measures should be taken for their prevention in future ? What are the best and most effective methods of stopping such disorders in their very early stages ? Many reports of Committee of inquiry about Communal Riots which took place in different parts of the country from time to time as well as judicial

records of important cases connected with such riots, should be available. Could you supply or get information about any such sources for further study and investigation? Do you consider that Committees or Panchayats for bringing about inter-communal harmony and peace should be set up in different places? If so, what should be the general principles on which their constitution should be based? What should be their objects and functions?

7 Social Aloofness

(a) What are the causes of social aloofness of Hindus from Muslims? What remedies would you suggest for removing the social barriers and for promoting social intercourse between them? What social customs, traditions, and modes of living keep them apart? Do you consider that removal of restrictions regarding caste, purdah, food, dress etc., will promote better understanding, goodwill and friendship among various communities? If so, what steps would you suggest for bringing about the necessary changes or reforms?

8 Educational Institutions

How far are communal schools and colleges,

responsible for promoting communal ill will and hatred ? What practical steps would you suggest for abolishing or counteracting communalism in such institutions ? To what extent does the teaching of religion in these institutions engender communalism ? It has been suggested by some that the Legislatures and Universities should be moved for prescribing courses for comparative study of various religions and religious cultures in all recognised secondary schools and colleges. Kindly give your considered view about it. How far is the prevailing method of teaching Indian History responsible for producing or promoting communal discord in the minds of impressionable boys and girls ? What changes would you suggest regarding the prescribed courses and text books of Indian History ? To what extent is the press of this country responsible for spreading communal hatred and bitterness ? How can the aggressive communal tone of some of the 'newspapers and other publications be effectively stopped ?

9 Religion in Politics

What is the true function of religion with reference to the state ? What should be the

relation of religion to politics? Is it not true that all advanced and progressive people in the world have practically separated politics from religion and that they do not now allow religious dogmas to interfere with their political work? What is the present position in Turkey and Japan? What does European History teach us in this respect? What steps should be taken to free politics in India from religion?

10 Fundamental Religious Unity

How far is there a fundamental unity between the several religions represented here? How far have we the same goals? What beliefs and principles do we hold in common? In what ways can the consciousness of this unity be realized by their respective followers?

11 Religious Differences

What are the chief causes of misunderstanding between our several religions? Distinguish between the differences due to (a) fundamental religious principles, (b) customary religious practice, and (c) unessential current religiosity. In your best judgment, what modification of prevailing practice in your religion would promote a better chance of understanding?

12 Experiment in Appreciation

What ways can you suggest by which we can come to regard more highly the good points in each other's religion? What could be done in schools and colleges? Among the public at large

13 Practical Promotion of Unity

What practical means can you suggest by which different classes of the population can be led to sink religious differences? What can be done through group effort? What plans have succeeded already in this direction i.e. in reducing differences to a minimum and in multiplying affinities to the utmost

14 Common Indian Culture

Is there such a thing as Indian culture which has resulted from the interaction of Hindu Muslim Christian Parsi Buddhist and British cultures? What is it and how can it be most speedily developed?

15 Economic Backwardness

* What are the practical methods which

should be adopted for the economic uplift of the poorer or the backward classes of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs respectively? Are these conditions chiefly responsible for the communal dissensions and disorders? If so, why?

16 Language Question

Is the language problem of India quite insoluble? What should be the *lingua franca* of this country? Name those Indian languages to which you will give provincial status. How many languages should be taught to Indian boys and girls in the interests of national solidarity?



CURE OF COMMUNALISM

We have to find some remedy for the toxin of inter Communal dissension which to day is vitiating our public life and perhaps our social life Let me be some what more precise here and use such frankness as is possible in one whose heartfelt desire is to allay and not to provoke discord My reference is not merely to communal rioting or open disturbance Disastrous as open disturbance may be sinister as are its effects in prolonging the alienation of rival communities it is not the whole of the problem perhaps not even its gravest feature My reference is rather to the fact that in every sphere of life and activity in social matters in almost every question of administration in the management of local affairs in the conduct of education

even in the current discussions of questions of law and justice, the Communal question intervenes" Sir Malcolm Hailey in 1924.

I make no apologies for the foregoing lengthy quotation from a brilliant speech which Sir Malcolm Hailey made as Governor of the Punjab, before the Punjab Legislative Council, in 1924. Since then much water has flowed under the bridges of the Ganges; but it is distressing to reflect that there has been no distinct improvement in the relations of the various communities of India. Communal tension is daily increasing and the Hindu-Muslim problem has so far defied all attempts at solution. Political physicians have suggested several panaceas and Communal quacks have been working at numerous nostrums but all to no purpose. The disease is so deep-rooted and wide-spread that even the most heroic political surgeon and the greatest political Vaid (Mahatma Gandhi) has unfortunately not been able to cure it.

There are many schools of thought among the Muslims of India at the present moment, but two of them are fairly vocal and articulate. The exponents of one school maintain that

separate electorates are the sole weapon of protecting effectively the rights of the Muslims and of saving them from political extinction. The supporters of the other group aver with equal force that joint electorates alone can promote the welfare and further the interests of the Muslims without in any way prejudicing the healthy growth of genuine nationalism and democracy in India. Weighing, carefully the pros and cons of the whole question in a detached and dispassionate manner it must be conceded that on the whole the Muslims are politically educationally and economically less advanced than the Hindus and some Muslims honestly feel that they are racially as well as culturally different from the other sister communities of India. It cannot be gainsaid that Minorities not only in India but throughout the world are perfectly justified in demanding legitimate safeguards in order to keep their religion and language intact. But there are safeguards and safeguards and I venture to submit that in final analysis separate electorates are positively harmful to the best interests of the Muslim community in India. The reasons are not far to seek —

- 1 A minority community is, after all a minority, and as such cannot influence the decisions of the majority community under separate electorates. Communal electorates perpetuate communal distinctions and deepen communal animosities, by putting premium on communal fanatics and die-hards, and so instead of political parties we get religious groups interested only in fostering communal frenzy.
2. Communal electorates isolate the minority community and consolidate the majority community and instead of being a help to the former are a source of danger to it.
3. Each community can never have a separate legislature of its own, for elected members go to the common legislature to work together with the members of other communities. Co-operation between members of several communities must, therefore, begin at the base of the common legislature, which is the electorate, and must necessarily be common or joint To sum up, separate electorates pre-suppose separate legislatures and common legis-

latures presuppose common electorates

Joint Electorates

It cannot be too often emphasized that under the present circumstances joint electorates form the only solution of the problem. Hence immediate scrapping of the Communal Award is indispensable. Here are some of the alternatives to the Award.

- (a) The best arrangement is joint electorates with adult franchise without any reservation whatsoever either for minorities or for majorities
- (b) Joint electorates with adult franchise and reservation of seats for minorities on the population basis. Over and above this reservation minorities should be given the right to contest additional seats. Nationalists swear by this scheme. But the British Ministers are too apt to pooh pooh the idea of adult franchise because suffering as they are from the Congress complex they fear that it will enable Congressmen to sweep the polls.
- (c) Joint electorates with reservation of seats

strictly proportionate to population both for majorities and minorities till the advent of adult franchise. This proposal is neither illogical nor anti-national, but is admittedly undemocratic. For obvious reasons, it can hardly be acceptable to Indian Christians Anglo-Indians and Europeans. Besides, Muslims of the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bombay, Bihar, Madras and Orissa, who have been ensured considerable "weightage" under the Communal Award, will never agree to it. Undoubtedly, it will not appeal to the Sikhs of the Punjab.

- (d) Joint electorates with reservation of seats for all minorities, in accordance with the "excessive" representation given to all minorities under the Communal Award in all provinces except the Punjab and the Bengal Presidency. Europeans in Bengal should only be given $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent instead of the 10 percent that has been unjustly allotted to them. Both in Bengal and the Punjab, 51 per cent seats should be reserved for Muslims on the explicit and definite understanding

that all reservations for minorities and majorities alike must disappear with the introduction of adult franchise. This formula (d) is undemocratic as well as irrational but it should be temporarily tolerated as a necessary evil for this is the only way out of the present impasse.

- (c) The above suggestions apply only to the Provincial Legislative Assemblies but immediate introduction of joint electorates in all the local bodies (Municipalities and District Boards) on the basis of the existing numerical representation of various communities will go a long way in allaying communal tension and in fostering salutary civic consciousness.

Minority Safeguards

In order to save Minorities from the tyranny of the Majority numerous remedies have been suggested and tried in various countries. It is worthwhile to mention some of them here —

- (a) A declaration couched in the clearest possible language of primary and fundamental rights should be incorporated as

a part of the Coming Constitution of India. It has been pointed out by the champions of the minority Communities that mere paper declaration of inalienable rights is meaningless until it is effectively implemented by law courts and that even then some of the rights are not "susceptible to legislative treatment" Impression left on the minds of some of us, after the systematic and sinister attempts made by Hitlerites in Germany to maltreat and repress the Jews, is extremely depressing. Nevertheless, Indians would do well to concentrate on an unambiguous declaration regarding "the use of minority languages as media of instruction, the distribution of public funds for educational and charitable purposes, the assurance of the right to establish, manage and control charitable, educational, social and religious institutions, the maintenance of family law and personal status in accordance with the usage of the groups concerned" and the assurance of the use of public amenities to every citizen irrespective of colour, creed, clan or caste. To make things

doubly sure and to enable law courts to implement the same precise language of the declaration should be included in the Royal Proclamation to be issued on the eve of the new Constitution

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- (b) All the Allied Nations should give definite guarantees to the religious Minorities of various countries as well as those of India that the latter will be permitted to preserve and promote their religion, language and culture without let or hindrance and that their political rights will never be in jeopardy In the event of the majority misbehaving towards a minority of minorities in any country they (the Allied Nations) will enforce sanctions against the unjust and power-intoxicated majority
- (c) Matters which are peculiar to certain religious Communities for instance their personal law and their distinctive social customs their religious institutions and prayer houses their linguistic and literary traditions should not be the subject of legislation by the Common Legislature

Special religious bodies or guilds run on the lines of the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee of the Punjab, should be established in all the provinces of India and these religious guilds should have the final say with regard to the religious, linguistic and cultural needs of respective cultural groups. Subjects which concern all citizens alike such as land revenue, law and order, irrigation, commerce and industry should be the province of the political administration.

- (d) List of provincial and central subjects should be very minutely and carefully drawn and the Central Federal Legislature should be competent only to legislate about the foreign affairs, defence, communications, currency and exchange and that residuary powers should vest with the provinces or federating units. In reality, in post-war era, defence and foreign affairs will be internationalized and world security will be ensured only by an international navy and an international air force and an international army. This is the only way of upholding

and vindicating four freedoms of President Roosevelt

(c) Standing orders for the proceedings of the Legislatures must provide adequate and reasonable opportunities for the full and effective presentation of minority points of view. In other words the speaker should be given powers to refuse closure if he thinks that minority point of view has not been properly presented as well as to ensure effective representation to minority groups on various Committees of the Legislature.

Social Aloofness

To pull ignorant or bigoted persons out of the bondage of effete superstitions and to rub off their angularities it is essential that in certain matters distinct departure from the inglorious past be made at least by those who consider themselves as out and out nationalists.

(a) A salutary beginning can be made by Hindu nationalists if they make it a point to engage Muslim cooks butlers and chauffeurs etc not only in preference to but to the exclusion of the Hindu servants and the Muslim nationalists.

must also resolve to invariably have Hindu servants in their houses. It has been correctly remarked that in India it is no joke to give up all at once anti-social habits and to throw off suddenly hampering mental luggage of the bygone days. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. (b) In order to promote effectively the growth of religious tolerance and cultural fellowship, there should be mutual exchange of children in this way, that a Hindu nationalist should bring up and educate along with his own children, the son or daughter of a nationalist Muslim, preferably of another province and a nationalist Muslim, should nurture and mentally chisel with his own offspring, the boy or girl of a Hindu nationalist, usually of another province. Thus, divisive tendencies and stupid notions of religious and cultural superiority will be nipped in the bud, untouchability will vanish, and by and by complete national solidarity will be achieved.

Communal Press

The cry is often raised that Communalism is due to the gutter and filthy section of the vernacular press, that proprietors of certain

newspapers have an axe to grind and that they are interested only in making money Due to the existence of separate electorates the tendency to exaggerate and accentuate points of difference cannot be wholly controlled or curbed try as hard as we might. But a wholesome start can be made if individuals are discouraged by the State and public bodies from starting fresh journalistic ventures and the editorial staff of various Dailies and Weeklies is in future recruited from all Communities The most important point to stress is that the financial control of newspapers should be in the hands of Limited joint stock companies the Directors of which should be selected from groups belonging to almost all the religious persuasions. The same principle should as far as possible apply to the Boards of Trustees of newspapers

Services

There should be a statutory provision to the effect that henceforward new entrants to Government jobs (Public Services) will be recruited on the numerical basis on which various communities will be represented in different Provincial Assemblies In the Central

Administration also the same principle should hold good. As a nationalist, my personal view is that a minority which is given special representation or ensured preferential and privileged treatment owing to its weak and backward state, is definitely encouraged to settle down into a feeling of satisfied security and, accordingly, is under no inducement to educate and qualify itself to make good the ground which it has lost compared with the stronger and more well-knit majority On the other hand, the latter will be tempted to think that they have done all they need to do for their weaker fellow countrymen and that they are free to use their power and resources for their own purposes The give and take which is the essence of life is lacking There is no inducement to the one side to forbear nor to the other to exert itself. But in an imperfect world, lofty idealism must sometimes be tampered with stark realism Distribution of political, economic and civic rights on a religious basis is altogether abhorrent to all the sincere well-wishers of India , but unluckily "the way to office is through communal politics , party machines have been created , and the division

between Hindu and Moslem would probably persist even if all religious beliefs and peculiar customs vanished from both sides In Lilliput the dispute between Big Endians and Little Endians was not as to the breaking of egg shells but as to the spoils of office—and this is the common end of religious faction — *India and Democracy* by Sir George Schuster and Guy Wint

Schools and Colleges

- (1) Those in charge of the existing communal schools and colleges should make it a point to open the doors of such institutions to Hindus and Muslims alike and efforts should be made to have as far as possible members of all communities on the teaching staff as well
- (2) Government should leave no stone unturned to discourage the indiscriminate multiplicity of communal schools and colleges Stringent rules should be framed and their full compliance insisted upon before giving sanction to a new communal educational institution Municipalities and District Boards should be asked not

to countenance the establishment of communal institutions in the future. There is unedifying rivalry among various communities in founding new communal schools and colleges. The opening of a Hindu school where a Government school already exists, is a sufficient impulse to egg on the Muslims of the locality to have one for themselves. They think themselves most unfortunate till self-seeking practicing vakils come to their rescue as Managers and Secretaries of the coming denominational institutions. The Sanatanists consider it is great calamity when they do not have their own schools side by side with those of the Arya Samajists. The same is true of the Sikhs. To many of our communal leaders who are now holding important positions in the provincial Governments these schools and colleges have served as ladders. In some respects, communal schools and colleges are worse than those under official or Government control, in as much as the former systematically tend to poison the minds of the younger generation by

Essence Let us therefore do unto others as
we would be done by This is the truth that
matters and •

You shall know the truth and
The truth shall make you free

